

## **From The Heart Music Hour Moves To PBS by Bill Lowrie**

From the Heart Recording Studio located in Sopchoppy, Florida, has for several years promoted local and regional musicians with the From the Heart Music Hour, a weekly program produced at the Studio and broadcast by Oyster Radio. Many of these musicians recorded at the studio as well. Now the next big step is about to happen. The Studio's owner, Nelle McCall, announced that the program is moving to television! The pilot episode will be recorded during performances by as many as 40 musicians at the beautiful Monticello Opera House on Friday, January 22, and on Saturday, January 23. Tickets are available and can be purchased at a number of locations which are listed below.

McCall said, "As you may suspect, while recording is an important step in a musician's career, getting their work on the radio is a major and challenging second step. It is particularly difficult in these days when, for the most part, the airways are managed by large corporations. But, in the Big Bend, we have Oyster Radio, a popular independent radio station." So, a couple of years ago, McCall met with Oyster Radio's owner Rick Plesinger and they decided that the best approach would be a weekly, self contained program, featuring local artists, and hosted by From the Heart's recording engineer and talented song writer and musician, Rick Ott.

Ott said, "We were able to have these folks come on the show to talk about their music and lives in general. In addition, many of our sponsors co-hosted the show which made it even more interesting and provided them a forum to discuss their own projects. For example, Tammie Barfield, from the Wakulla News, hosted a show which helped bring the two advertising mediums together providing even more exposure for the musicians." Ott continued, "We were also fortunate to run the show during the elections. Our "One on One" sessions with several candidates for office resulted in some great shows that gave the candidates an opportunity to explain their positions on the issues but also to show their support for the musicians with whom they shared the hour." Morty Beckman, from Tallahassee's Music Center, joined Rick on several shows and became the unofficial co-host. "We had some great shows together," says Ott. "We talked, laughed, and played great music. That to me is a great radio show."

"Eventually we felt that we had done all we could within the framework of this show," said McCall. "So we began looking for other ways to introduce the public to the great music coming out of the studio. It soon became clear that the natural progression would be to somehow move to television. But, as you might imagine, the networks weren't just waiting for us to call. Then it hit me! Public television. This seemed obvious since **we** are, after all, the public. We made a few calls and soon had a meeting with Pat Keating, General Manager of WFSU-TV, our local PBS affiliate."

McCall continued, "Pat thought it was a great idea to have a show of this type on WFSU but said that there were no funds in their budget to produce it. Nevertheless, he was interested in providing the airtime if we could produce the show. And so we began making more calls. We got a great response as many people stepped forward to support the project and plans for the first episode were made. This pilot episode will not only provide access to a major audience for the artists but will also help raise funds for WFSU, which has been so generous with their support in helping us put the show together. And, if all goes well, we

hope to develop this into a regularly featured program and dream of the possibility of it going national.”

The pilot will be taped over two nights, Friday and Saturday, January 22 and 23, at the Monticello Opera House and will air on WFSU later in the spring. “The Opera House is a fantastic place to tape a show,” said McCall. “There is not a bad seat in the house.”

Tickets are on sale for \$15 for one night or \$25 for both nights at the Monticello Opera House (850-997-4242), Music Center Tallahassee (850-942-0626), From the Heart Recording Studio (850-962-5282), and at The Tire Center in Thomasville (229-228-0260). The program features about 40 musicians with a different lineup each night. The full schedule can be seen on [fromtheheartofsochoppy.com](http://fromtheheartofsochoppy.com). For information call 850-962-5282 or email [fromtheheartrecordingstudio@gmail.com](mailto:fromtheheartrecordingstudio@gmail.com).

“We need everyone’s support to help make this dream of a regional show going National into a reality. We hope you can join us at the Opera House,” said McCall. “I want to thank a few people who have stepped up to help us get this far,” she continued. “I’ll start with the musicians, and then the Monticello Opera House, WFSU-TV, Marc Bowerman Creative, Production Support Group and the people who put there money where there heart is including. Hamaknockers Oasis, Shoreline Medical Group, The Music Center, Metlife Resources, Clinicare Home Medical, Sisters Antiques and Uniques, Posh Organics and Gifts, Backwoods Bistro, Ameris Bank, and Greater Big Bend Music. We also want to thank all the newspapers and radio stations who have helped promote this show and the artists it represents.”